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American Girl®

March/April 1995

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Puddles

Rainy Day Fun

Pedals

Samantha's New Bicycle

Puppies

Raising a Guide Dog

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A super chocolate cake with the funnest frosting ever!

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From bloomers to racing shorts: 100 years of girls on bikes

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American Girl®

Celebrating Girls, Yesterday and Today

March/April 1995

Jenny Folkerts



Come to Work at American Girl!

Sneak a peek at how
this issue was made

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Puppy Love

One girl's wonderful
year with a guide dog

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On the cover

Meet Jenny Folkerts,
age 11. During thunder-
storms, Jenny likes to
sit on the porch and
watch the lightning
with her six brothers
and sisters. "If the elec-
tricity goes out," she
says, "we play games
by candlelight!"

Cover photo: Paul Tryba



Letters from You



Francie

Thank you for your story about Francie in the November/December issue. My best friend has cerebral palsy and can't walk or talk. She has a machine called a Liberator that talks for her. That was a wonderful story.

Lisa Mihalich
Age 11, Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania



Handbell Happiness

I liked your November/December story about the girl who plays handbells because I play in a bell choir, too. The way you described it is almost the exact way we do it.

Erin McCarthy
Age 10, Shoreham, New York



Lots of Spots

I was so surprised to see a crossword about spotted things in the November/December issue because I would fall into that category! I have chicken pox.

Johanna Kingsley
Age 8, Heuvelton, New York



Shall We Dance?

I loved "Shall We Dance?" in the November/December issue. I practiced the steps and showed them to my friends. We all agree you're splendidous!

Stephanie Collier
Age 11, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida



Homework Help

The advice Julianna Benish gave in the November/December Help! made me hop right off my chair and do my homework. Thanks, Julianna!

Bessie Belluscio
Age 10, Whiting, New Jersey



Holiday Ideas

When I read the holiday ideas in the November/December issue I was surprised. It is not like you to give only Christmas ideas. What about Jewish girls?

Rebecca Sherma
Age 10, Needham, Massachusetts

We hoped surprise balls and gift wraps would be fun for any holiday. But we'd love to hear more ideas for Hanukkah or other holidays. We don't want to leave anyone out!

American Girl



PRESIDENT

Pleasant T. Rowland

PUBLISHER

Margo L. Clark



CIRCULATION MANAGER
Jennifer Gross



CIRCULATION COORDINATOR
Lynn Newhouse



EDITOR

Judith Woodburn

SENIOR EDITOR
Michelle Nowadly Watkins

FEATURES EDITOR

Therese Kauchak Smith

MANAGING EDITOR
Julie A. Finlay

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Harriet Brown, Nancy Holyoke

ART DIRECTOR
Kym Abrams

MANAGING ART DIRECTOR
Anne Lepley Wilkins

PRODUCTION MANAGER
Karn Litsheim

GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

Kirstin Daniels, Gail Rogoznica-McKernin,
Heather Miller, Megan Newton



CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Samantha Bonar, Donna Freedman, Cathryn Harding,
Nancy Martel, Stephanie Ragsdale



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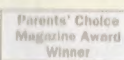
Barb Babcock, Rebecca Bernstein,
Carl Burgwardt, Sally Paulis,
Pat Smythe, Lori Strong, Jean Tucker



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Girls Express



Buzzword

American girls everywhere are using this buzzword this season:

flabbergasted

Say it: "FLAB-er-gas-ted"

What it means: astonished, overwhelmed with surprise

Where it comes from: About 200 years ago, someone somewhere put two ordinary words together and made a brand-new one. *Flap* (or *flab*) was added to *aghost*, which means shocked. Ta-da! *Flabbergast* was born.

One way to use it: "Jennifer was flabbergasted when her friends threw her a surprise birthday party."



The buzzword is tucked somewhere into this issue. Can you find it?

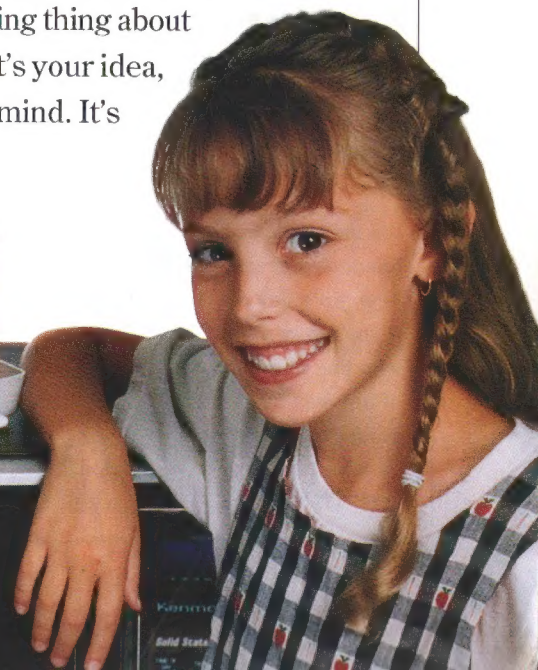
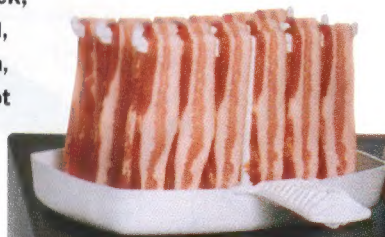
Really Cooking

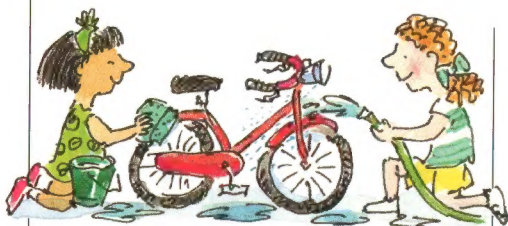
Abbey Fleck was just a hungry eight-year-old waiting for breakfast when she noticed the mess her dad made cooking bacon on a plate in the microwave. As the bacon cooked, fat pooled up on it and made it greasy. Abbey's dad used nearly a whole roll of paper towels to sop up the mess! That's when Abbey had a bright idea: to design a rack that lets the fat drip off the bacon.

First she drew a picture of her idea. Then she and her father built and tested models in their kitchen. It took almost two years to perfect a version, but the work was worth it. Abbey's dad showed her invention, called Makin Bacon™, to Armour Foods. The company decided to advertise it on 20 million packages of bacon!

So far, more than 30,000 of Abbey's Makin Bacon dishes have been sold. But the most rewarding thing about being an inventor, she says, "is that it's your idea, and it actually came from your own mind. It's cool, because you made it!"

Abbey Fleck,
of St. Paul,
Minnesota,
and her hot
invention





Moneymaker

"Set up a bike wash! I tried this with my friends. Children's bikes were \$1 to wash and adult bikes were \$1.50. We had soapy water in a bucket and a hose to rinse off the soap. We also served lemonade and popcorn for 25 cents each. We set up chairs, tables, and magazines for people who wanted to sit, talk, read, eat, or drink while we washed their bikes. Our bike wash worked great!"

Caroline Womack
Age 12, Farmington Hills, Michigan

Kindness Counts!



This issue's Kindness Counts award goes to Larissa Lalor, age 11, of Sunrise, Florida.

One morning a new girl climbed aboard Larissa's school bus. She had just moved to Florida from Jamaica. The girl looked for a place to sit, but no one would share a seat. Some kids teased her, and she began to cry. Larissa made room for the new girl. When they got to school, Larissa walked her to her classroom. After school, Larissa walked the girl to the bus.

We salute Larissa because she made a new girl's day easier. If you know a girl who has gone out of her way for someone, write us about her!



Tricky Kicks and Giant Jumps



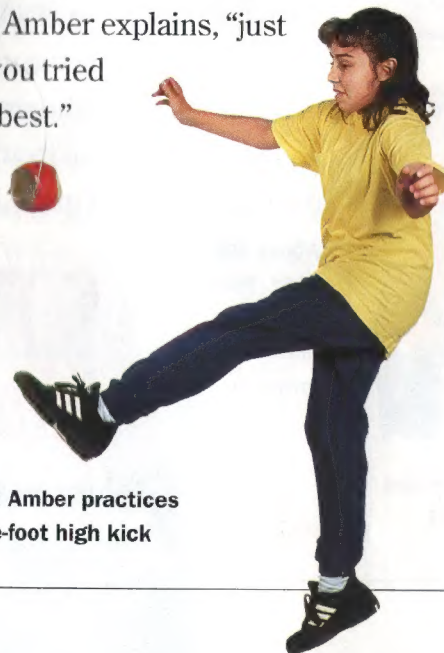
Amber Davis

Amber Davis, 12, loves baseball and basketball. She also loves the one-foot high kick and the kneel jump.

The last two sports are events in the Native Youth Olympics. The Olympics are a yearly get-together for hundreds of Alaskan kids, held in Anchorage.

No one knows just when the unique games were invented. Hundreds of years ago, Native Americans in Alaska played the sports to build their strength, so they could better endure the harsh climate. Today the games are a part of Alaskan heritage. They teach kids that "you should be proud to be who you are," says Amber, an Athabascan Indian.

Amber learned the games from her family in Anchorage. Now that she's in the Native Youth Olympics, she has found that good sportsmanship is more important than winning medals. Last year, she helped other girls work on their jumps. "It doesn't matter if you win," Amber explains, "just that you tried your best."



Kick it! Amber practices her one-foot high kick

You Try It

Follow these directions to try your own version of the Native Youth Olympics at home.



One-Foot High Kick

Roll a pair of socks into a ball. Hang the ball from a ceiling or tree branch, so it's four feet off the ground. Jump up from both feet and kick the ball with one foot. You must land on the same foot you kicked with. How high can you raise the ball before you miss? The Alaskan state record is seven feet.



Kneel Jump

Kneel behind a line with your toes pointed out behind you, sitting on your heels. Then leap forward and land on both feet at the same time, without touching your hands to the ground. The record jump is 4 feet, 2 inches.

Photo: Lin Mitchell Illustrations: Susan McAliley

Scrumptious Sundae Contest

Ice cream lovers, unite! It's time for *American Girl's* scrumptious sundae contest. Dream up the best-tasting ice cream sundae you can, and send the recipe to us. We'll pick the most delectable delights and print the recipes in a future issue. **CONTEST DEADLINE:** April 7, 1995.



A Plugged-In Diary

You can do just about anything on a computer these days—even keep a diary. But is a computer diary any better than the old-fashioned handwritten kind?

To find out, we asked three girls to test *My Computer Diary*, a software program for girls age ten and older. It's available for IBM-compatible computers, on floppy disk or CD-ROM. The program gives girls a place to record their thoughts. It can also be used as a word processor or date book, and gives information about important women in history. It even lets girls pick passwords so secrets are protected!

Here's what our testers said:



"I liked it because it was new and different. I think I will use the computer diary for a while, but it's hard to look back and read

what you wrote earlier. A computer diary is also much harder to hand down to your children than a book diary."

Marian Kuemmerlein
Age 12, Kansas City, Missouri



"I liked the password. With my regular diary, my brother kept finding the key. I had trouble with some of the features on the

computer diary, but when I got them to work I enjoyed them. Overall, I love this!"

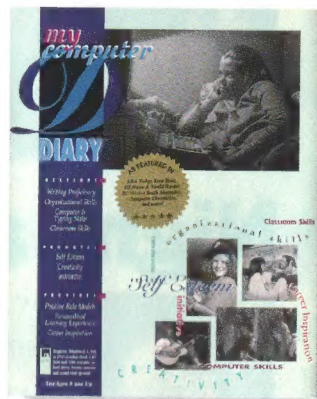
Sarah Ruth Bluckman
Age 10, Fairfield, Connecticut



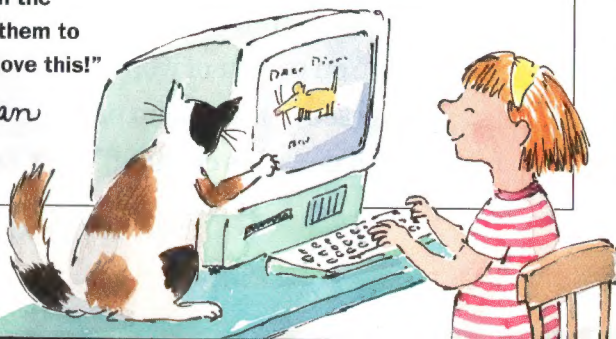
"I liked being able to choose pretty lettering to print things out. The daily planner was nice,

but I didn't have anything to plan. I would play with this but keep my handwritten diary. I can write in my paper diary in the car or in the woods. I can't do *My Computer Diary* in the woods—there's no plug!"

Laura Bestler
Age 10, Roann, Indiana



My Computer Diary, from Stone & Associates, is \$59.95 on floppy disk and \$69.95 on CD-ROM.



A.G.'s

POLL



Extra! Extra! On this special two-sided poll we want you to tell us all about the things you love the most. Fill in the blanks with your absolute all-time favorite things.

My all-time favorite

color:

flavor of ice cream:

candy:

breakfast cereal:

dinner food:

girl's name:

book:

movie:

TV show:

cartoon:

board game:

card game:

number:

keepsake:

(over)



Cut out your answers and mail them to us.



A.G.'s Poll, Part 2

Continued from page 5

My all-time favorite

female athlete:

male athlete:

female singer:

male singer:

musical group:

flower:

holiday:

season:

Cut out your answers and mail them to us.



Write to Us!

Send your response to the A.G. Poll, along with your answers to other questions in Girls Express, to the address below. Be sure to include your name and AGE.

AmericanGirl

Girls Express

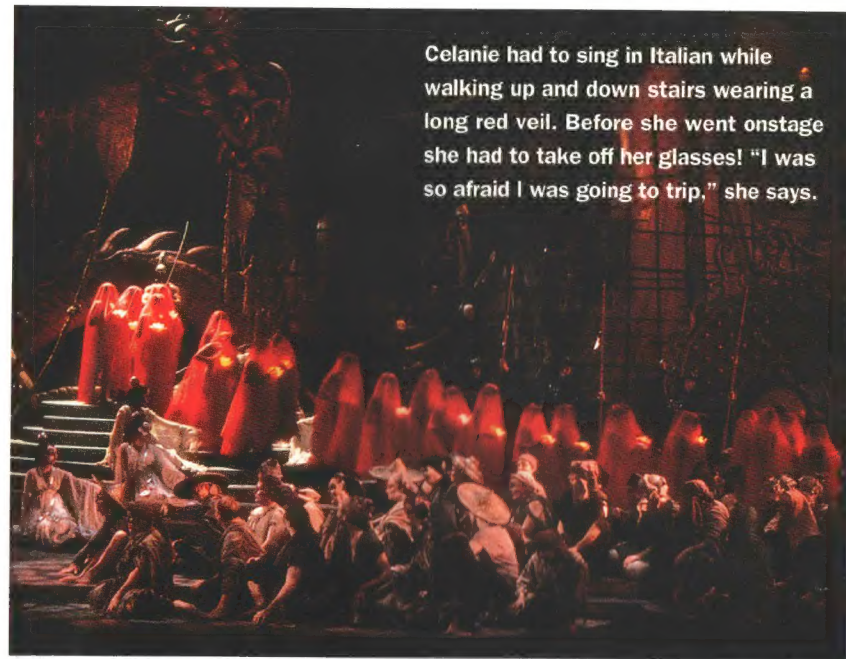
8400 Fairway Place

Middleton, WI 53562



Help Wanted!

Can your cat turn on the kitchen light? Have you taught Fido to fetch your favorite book? We want to know what funny tricks your pets can do. Write and tell us the details. If you can, send a picture showing us your pet doing its best trick.



Celanie had to sing in Italian while walking up and down stairs wearing a long red veil. Before she went onstage she had to take off her glasses! "I was so afraid I was going to trip," she says.

Night at the Opera



Like other girls, Celanie Polanick dreams of becoming a famous singer. Unlike most girls, however, Celanie hopes to be an *opera* singer—and she's already been in a professional opera.

An opera is a play set to music. Most words are sung—usually in a language other than English.

(Celanie Polanick) Celanie, age 12, has been an opera fan since she was young. "My parents always liked opera, and I'd watch operas with them on TV," she explains.

Celanie sings with the Children's Festival Chorus in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. When the Pittsburgh Opera needed extra people to perform in the opera *Turandot* last year, they went to Celanie's chorus. Celanie was one of 24 kids chosen.

Celanie practiced for six weeks. On opening night, "everyone was really nervous, even the stars," she says. "You're sort of wondering if the practice is going to pay off. When it does, it's exciting!"



Celanie, right, warms up backstage.

It's Raining . . . But Not Boring

*If you're stuck inside on a rainy day,
These fun ideas will chase your blues away!*



"Make a movie. First write a script. If you need ideas, use a book you've read. Ask friends to be in your movie. Have auditions, choose music, and use costumes. Be creative!"

Brittini V. Brown
Age 11, Stamford, Connecticut

"Write your pet's life story."

Emily Constantine
Age 10, Racine, Wisconsin



"My brother and I play Wild Goose Chase. I write something on a piece of paper like 'Look for me in the shower.' He'll go there and find a note that says 'Look in the refrigerator.' He'll go *there* and find another note. Finally he might find me hiding under the bed. Or, if he's lucky, he might find candy or a gift!"

Katie Wise
Age 11, Akron, Ohio

"My sister and I dress up. We take a few of everyone's unusual clothes and make crazy outfits. We have fun and get interesting photographs!"

Shayla Smith
Age 10, Idyllwild, California



"Make a board game with cardboard and paints. Use pennies for game pieces."

Desiree Gregory
Age 12, Nantucket, Massachusetts



"Have a picnic in your living room. Spread a tablecloth on the floor, fill a basket with picnic food, and ask your family or a friend to eat with you."

Lauren Kitz
Age 9, Santa Monica, California

Divorce

We asked: What advice can you give girls whose parents are getting divorced?



After my parents got divorced, it took me a long time to get used to our new lifestyle. It felt strange not

having both parents in the house. I was sad and wished they would get back together, but I realized it was better this way. They weren't fighting all the time.

Sheena Goldstein

Age 10, Davidson, North Carolina



If you feel you can't talk about divorce with your parents, keep a secret journal with all your

emotions in it. It really helps.

Chelsea Halpine-Berger

Age 10, Willimantic, Connecticut



My parents have been divorced since I was six years old. My advice for other girls is this: Always

remember that a divorce is not your fault. Often mothers and fathers are happier and better parents when they're apart.

Ashlen Anderson

Age 11, Tacoma, Washington



One thing I did when my parents got a divorce was go to a counselor.

With a counselor, you can let out your feelings. You can tell them anything, and they won't tell anyone else.

Kathryn Boettcher

Age 11, Traverse City, Michigan



When I'm upset about my mom and dad being divorced, I talk and write to the people I trust. Those

people are my mom, aunts, friends, grandma, and counselors.

Rachel Cosio

Age 9, Woodland, California



If your parents live in separate houses after the divorce, my advice is to divide your toys, dolls, and

other things equally between the two houses. That way both places will feel like home. And remember that your parents will always love you, no matter what.

Erin Omgman

Age 13, Irvine, California



Never forget the parent you don't live with. You can keep a framed picture of him or her, make a scrapbook, or make a collage out of pictures. Whenever you feel sad, look at the pictures.

Laura Dziorny
Age 10, Manchester, Connecticut



If you miss the parent who doesn't live with you, call that parent at a special time every night so you can hear his or her voice.

Athalee Thomas
Age 11, Brooklyn, New York



If your parents are divorced and one parent tells you to carry a message to the other parent, ask them to do it themselves. Chances are, the message is going to make your other parent mad.

Jessica Hedrick
Age 9, Charlotte, North Carolina



Some kids dream that all they have to do is set up an unexpected meeting and their parents will forget about the divorce and live happily ever after. On TV, sure, but not in real life. You need to learn to live with the divorce. Things won't be like they were when your parents were married, but the situation will get better.

Amber Cushing
Age 12, Concord, New Hampshire

What to Do If It Happens to You



If it seems as if your world has turned upside down:

When your parents divorce, you may feel angry, cry a lot, or even have trouble in school. When you feel upset, try to figure out exactly what's bothering you. Are you worried you won't get enough time with your mom? Are you afraid you'll miss your dad? Write down the problem. Then think of two ways to solve it. Share your ideas with both parents.



If your parents want you to choose sides:

Divorce scares parents, too. Your father might be afraid you'll care more for your mother than for him, and vice versa. Parents may do things to test your love. If you feel pressured to choose sides, tell your parents how you feel. You don't have to choose. It's O.K. to love them equally.

Let's Talk Some More

American Girl invites you to send in answers to Talk It Out. Some will be printed in a future issue.

Next subject: Death of a loved one. Have you ever lost someone you feel close to? How did you get through it? Sometimes girls don't know what to say when a friend's loved one dies. What did your friends say? What do you wish they had said?

Send your answers and a school picture to:
AmericanGirl 8400 Fairway Place, Middleton,
WI 53562. Deadline: April 7, 1995. Be sure
to include your name and age. ★

Grandmary!" Samantha called out excitedly. "It's Uncle Gard and Aunt Cornelia! They're here!"

Down the stairs Samantha flew, and out the big doors to the front porch. She took the steps in a single leap and threw herself into Gard's arms just as he climbed out of his auto. "Oh, Uncle Gard!" she said. "We missed you so!"

"We missed you too, Sam," said Gard as he hugged her. "We're glad to be back."

This was Gard and Cornelia's first visit to Mount Bedford since their wedding. After their honeymoon they had taken a few days to settle into their new town house in New York City. Samantha had been waiting impatiently for this visit. She wanted it to be perfect, so

Gard and Cornelia would come visit often. She did not want to be left out of their lives now that they were married.

Grandmary came down the steps and hugged Cornelia hello. Then she tilted her cheek to receive Gard's kiss. "Gardner, dear," she said. "It has been entirely too dull and quiet here without you and your dreadful automobile."

Cornelia smiled at Samantha. "What a pretty pinafore!" she said. "Is it new?"

"Yes," said Samantha happily. She held out the skirt of the ruffly white pinafore. "It's special for your visit."

"It makes you look very tall," said Cornelia. "I believe you've grown a foot since we've been away."

The Beautiful

BY VALERIE TRIPP

ILLUSTRATED BY DEBORAH CHABRIAN

At last! Gard and Cornelia are back from their honeymoon—with a surprise for Samantha, too. It seems that happy times lie ahead. Then their big gift turns into big trouble.

Gard stared at Samantha's feet. "Still only two that I can see," he joked. "Thank goodness! Otherwise she'd have a hard time using the present we brought her." With a dramatic *whoosh*, Gard pulled the canvas tarp off the back of the auto. Samantha gasped when she saw what was there: three shiny new bicycles.

"We got them in England," said Gard as he lifted the bicycles down. "They're the very latest models."

"I told Gard it was high time you had a bicycle, Samantha," said Cornelia. "I loved cycling when I was your age. It's so fast and free! I'm sure you'll love it, too."

"And here's the best part of all," added Gard. "We're going to leave the bicycles here in Mount Bedford. Just think of the fun we'll

have, the three of us, bicycling together!"

The three of us . . . Samantha was so happy she couldn't speak.

"This one is yours, Sam," said Gard. He rolled a beautiful blue bicycle toward her.

"Oh, thank you," said Samantha. She put one hand on the shiny handlebars and the other on the leather seat and looked up at her grandmother. "Please, Grandmary," she asked eagerly, "may I keep it?" She was worried, for she knew very well that Grandmary thought bicycles were dangerous and not quite proper for young ladies. That's why Samantha had never had one, even though she was ten years old.

Grandmary sighed. "In my day," she said, "bicycles were ridden in circus acts by

Blue Bicycle



women wearing tights. Soon everywhere you looked there were women riding bicycles on the streets. Some of them wore hideous short, puffy trousers called bloomers. We referred to those women as Bloomer Girls." She sniffed. "Most unladylike!"

In a panic, Samantha swerved hard to the right. "Help!" she shrieked. *Crash!*

Cornelia spoke up gently. "A lady is a lady no matter what she's wearing," she said. "I hardly think Samantha will act improperly on her bicycle."

"Indeed not!" Grandmary replied tartly. She turned and smiled at Samantha. "I can see that you have your heart set on riding this bicycle with Gard and Cornelia, dear girl," she said. "You may keep it if you promise to be careful."

"I will," promised Samantha.

"Well then, hop on, Sam!" said Gard. He held the bike. When Samantha sat on the seat, the skirt of her dress and her pinafore and her petticoats billowed around her. She tucked them all under her legs to get them out of the way. Then Gard pushed and she pedaled and the wheels turned, and there she was, riding the bicycle with Gard running alongside holding her steady!

"Hurray!" Cornelia cheered.

The ruffles on Samantha's pinafore fluttered and her heart did, too. Riding the

bicycle was harder than she had thought it would be. She tried to keep the front tire from wobbling, and she tried to keep a smile on her face, but she was nervous. She was afraid she would topple over if it were not for Gard's firm hold.

"Are you ready for me to let go?" Gard asked after a few minutes.

Samantha gulped. "Yes," she said, wanting to impress Gard and Cornelia by being a quick learner. Gard let go, and she rode the bike in a big, slow, shaky circle on the driveway.

When she stopped, Gard and Cornelia clapped and cheered. "I knew you'd get the hang of it right away!" Cornelia praised her.

"Let's go to the park," Gard suggested with enthusiasm. "There are lots of paths there, so you won't have to go round in circles."

"Dear me!" said Grandmary. "Don't you think it's a bit too soon?"

"I think it's up to Sam," said Gard. "If she's plucky enough to try the park, then we should let her. What do you say, Sam?"

Samantha was *not* sure she wanted to go to the park, but she *was* sure she wanted to be plucky. "Let's go," she said.

"That's my girl!" said Gard proudly.

The park was crowded with bicyclists enjoying the sunny spring day. Samantha thought they were all cycling rather fast, as if their bicycles were being hurried along by the brisk spring breeze.

"Be careful," Grandmary cautioned from



2. What is a boneshaker?



her perch on a park bench. "Don't go too fast."

"You go first, Sam," said Gard as they wheeled their bicycles to the path that ran alongside the lake. "Cornelia and I will follow and keep an eye on you."

"All right," said Samantha. Feeling awkward and unsteady, she mounted her bicycle. She wanted to tuck her skirts out of the way, but there wasn't time. Her bicycle started rolling forward before she had even pushed down on the pedals!

The path was wide, but it wasn't as flat or as smooth as the driveway. It dropped off sharply on her right along the bank of the lake. Samantha pedaled slowly, concentrating as hard as she could on not falling.

Suddenly she felt a tug. She looked down. Her skirt had caught in the bike chain! She

started to yank it free, but just then Uncle Gard shouted, "Watch out!"

Samantha looked up. To her horror, she saw that a cyclist was flying straight toward her at top speed! In a panic, Samantha swerved hard to the right. Her bike lurched off the path and bounced down the bank out of control.

"Help!" she shrieked. She struggled to steer, but the front wheel wobbled violently. *Crash!* The bicycle smashed into a huge rock. In a terrible tangle, Samantha and the bicycle fell right into the mucky water at the edge of the lake. *Splash!*

"Samantha!" shouted Gard and Cornelia as they rushed down the slope to help her. "Are you all right?"

Samantha bit her lip and nodded, though she

was fighting back tears. Her ankle was twisted, her stockings torn, and she had a bad scrape on one hand. Her new pinafore was mud-spattered, grass-stained, and grease-streaked. Her skirt was so badly twisted around the chain that she had to rip it to get it free.

Grandmary appeared at the top of the bank. "Merciful heavens!" she exclaimed. "It's a wonder you weren't killed! I hope no bones are broken."

"No, Mother," Gard called up to her as he helped Samantha stand. "Sam's fine."

"The poor child's had enough foolishness for one day," said Grandmary firmly. "We're going home—right now."

When Grandmary said *poor child*, Cornelia got a stubborn look in her eye. "Samantha," she asked. "Do you want to go home now?"

With all her heart, Samantha wanted to go home. She hated the idea of getting back on the bicycle. But she hated the idea of disappointing Gard and Cornelia even more. She wiped her hands on her ruined pinafore and tried to think what to say.

Practice? thought
Samantha. I never want
to get on that bicycle
again as long as I live!

"Got to get back on the horse that threw you, right, Sam?" said Uncle Gard.

Samantha looked at the muddy bicycle and noticed something. With tremendous relief she said, "I don't think *I can* get back

on, Uncle Gard. The front tire is flat."

Gard picked up the bicycle and looked at the tire. "You're right," he said. "We'll have to have it fixed. No more riding today."

"What a shame!" said Cornelia with a sigh.

"Don't be too disappointed, Sam," Gard said as they walked back to the automobile. "We'll try again soon. Meanwhile you'll have time to practice."

Practice? thought Samantha. *I never want to get on that bicycle again as long as I live!*

One afternoon a few days later, when Samantha came home from school, Grandmary said, "Hawkins has fixed your bicycle."

"That's nice," said Samantha dully.

"He will help you if you feel you must practice," Grandmary added.

"No!" said Samantha. "I mean, no thank you, not today. I can't! I . . . I have too much schoolwork to do."

"Very well," said Grandmary.

Samantha could tell by the look on Grandmary's face that she was a little surprised. She wished she could tell Grandmary how fearful she was of the bicycle, but she was too ashamed of her fear to tell the truth.

For the next week, whenever Samantha walked past the carriage house she looked away, thinking about the bicycle sitting inside unused. Whenever she remembered her scary fall she shivered. She wished she *had* broken some bones. She wished she had damaged the bicycle beyond all repair. She wished she'd get the chicken pox again,

or that winter would come back and cover everything with snow. Anything, *anything* to excuse her from riding that hateful bicycle.

Then, on Saturday afternoon, the telephone rang.

"Hello!" said Gard's cheery voice. "Guess what? Cornelia and I are coming out to Mount Bedford next weekend, and we're bringing Cornelia's sisters with us. Agnes and Agatha are crackerjack cyclists. We'll all go on a long bicycle ride together and bring a picnic. Doesn't that sound like fun, Sam?"

"Mmm-hmm," said Samantha, her heart sinking.

"Keep practicing," said Gard. "See you soon! Goodbye!"

"Goodbye," said Samantha. After she hung up the telephone she stood next to it for a moment, deep in misery. She pictured herself standing with Grandmary on the front porch, waving goodbye to Gard, Cornelia, Agnes, and Agatha as they tootled off merrily on their bicycles, leaving her behind. How could she tell Gard and Cornelia that she hated the bicycle they'd given her, and that they'd *never* ride together again?

In desperation, Samantha went to the carriage house. She wheeled her bicycle out onto the driveway and climbed on nervously. She took a deep breath, pushed down on one pedal, and rolled forward. Just as before, the front tire wobbled wildly, her skirt got caught in the chain, and *crash!* Down she fell on the driveway.

"I can't do it! I can't!" she wailed to no one. She pulled her skirt free, kicked the bike



away from her in anger, then bent her head and cried in shame and frustration.

Grandmary came out of the house. She knelt next to Samantha and put her arms around her. She let Samantha finish crying before she asked, "Are you all right, dear?"

"I hate that bicycle!" Samantha said fiercely. "I'm scared to ride it. Every time I do my skirt gets tangled, I lose control, and I fall. Uncle Gard said I was plucky, but I'm not. I'm a scaredy-cat."

"And yet you tried again just now," said Grandmary. "I saw you."

Samantha tried to explain. "Riding bicycles was something Uncle Gard and Aunt Cornelia and I were going to do *together*," she said slowly. "If I can't ride, I'm afraid they won't visit very often . . ."



"And we'll be left out of their lives," Grandmary finished for her.

Samantha nodded.

"Well," said Grandmary. "Perhaps I can help you."

Samantha was surprised. "But I thought you didn't approve of the bicycle," she said. "I thought you didn't want me to ride it."

Grandmary smiled. "I would not have chosen a bicycle for you myself," she said. "But I don't want you to be left out of the fun. Besides, it's you who'll have to ride the bicycle, not I. Do you think you can do it?"

Samantha took a deep breath. She looked at the bicycle, then she looked at Grandmary. "I really want to try," she said.

"Very well," said Grandmary. "Here's what we'll do. . . ."

Saturday was bright and beautiful. "It's just the day for a bike ride!" exclaimed Gard as he helped Cornelia and Agnes and Agatha out of the auto at Grandmary's house.

"Indeed it is," said Grandmary, coming down the steps to greet them.

Samantha opened her window and called, "Hello, everyone!"

"Hello, Sam!" Uncle Gard called back. "Are you ready for some fun?"

"I sure am!" answered Samantha. "I'll be right there!" When Samantha burst out of the front doors, all of the visitors gasped.

"Jiminy!" exclaimed Agnes. "Bloomers!"

"Bloomers!" Agatha sighed enviously.

"Samantha, you're so lucky! I can't believe

Grandmary lets you wear them."

"They were Grandmary's ideal!" said Samantha. "Now I don't have to worry about my skirt getting caught. I've been wearing bloomers all week while I've practiced riding. Watch this!"

Samantha hopped on her bicycle and rode in a big circle around the driveway without wobbling a bit.

"Why, Grandmary," said Cornelia. "You astonish me."

Grandmary's eyes twinkled. "A lady is a lady no matter what she's wearing," she said. Then she and Cornelia laughed together.

"Come on, everyone," called Samantha. "Let's go!" Samantha led the way on her beautiful blue bicycle. At the end of the driveway, she turned and waved goodbye to Grandmary. Then she rode off down the road.

"Hey, Sam!" Uncle Gard called after her. "Wait for us!" ★

Meet the Author

Valerie Tripp



After I crashed into a rock and had a terrible fall, I feared and hated my bicycle just as Samantha did. But I hated even more being left behind when my sisters went on long bike rides. Training wheels—not bloomers!—helped me overcome my fear and learn to love bike riding.

Valerie Tripp has written 15 books in the American Girls Collection, including three about Samantha.

Pedaling from Past to Present

Follow along! Discover how bicycles inspired new clothes and new ideas that helped get American girls on the go!

Bumpy ride

Some of the earliest bicycles had big wooden wheels with iron tires. No wonder people called them *boneshakers*! The young woman on the far left is riding a boneshaker. You can see the problems caused by riding in skirts!

By the 1880s, bicycles with huge front wheels were designed. The "high-wheeler" became so popular that people began

to call it the *ordinary*. But if you were wearing a skirt, riding an ordinary bike took extraordinary effort! To make riding an ordinary bike easier, some women and girls wore bloomers, like the girl on the opposite page. Many people were flabbergasted when they first saw women in bloomers. Nevertheless, bloomers were a common sight in American cities by 1895.



Family fun

The family on the right was ready to ride in the early 1890s, thanks to new *safety bikes*. Women and girls especially liked the safety bike's low bar and smaller, equal-size wheels, which made riding in skirts easier. Safety bikes helped start a bicycling craze in America by the mid-1890s. Soon it seemed as if every American town had its own cycling club.

Clothing for women and girls was now designed to fit *active* lifestyles. Skirts were made shorter and tight-fitting corsets were made looser. Of course, many cycling skirts were brown or tan. A proper young lady wouldn't want the dust and dirt to show!





Go, girls!

Some people thought of the bicycle as a "freedom machine" for female riders. Before bicycles, people used horses to get around. Girls weren't usually allowed to drive or ride horses by themselves. But bicycles easily took a girl anywhere she wanted to go! Was this new freedom machine a good thing? Some people—like the writer of this poem—certainly didn't think so!

*Before she got her bicycle,
She sometimes used to make
The beds and wash the dishes
And help her mother bake.*

*But now she's got her bicycle,
She doesn't do a thing
About the house, but day and night
She's always on the wing!*

Just a toy?

By the 1920s, when these girls were riding, the bicycling craze in America had long since died. More families could afford new cars in the 1920s, making bicycles less important for getting around. Now bicycles were called *sidewalk bikes*, and many people thought of them as toys for children. But bicycles remained popular with women. In fact, women's colleges like Smith and Wellesley became famous for their cycling students!



Snazzy stuff

From 1941 to 1945, while America fought in World War Two, few new bicycles were made for children. The bicycles that were produced were called *Victory bicycles*. Adults were encouraged to ride them to conserve gasoline.

After the war, bikes were available for children once again. Girls adored the new colorful bikes with fancy features like battery-operated horns and lights. This girl shows off two trends of her time—a Shelby bike and saddle shoes!



Going bananas!

In the 1960s, bikes weren't just for kids anymore. More and more people began biking to work and on errands to try to cut down on the pollution caused by cars.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, girls went bananas over a brand-new bike design. These bikes had banana-shaped seats and high-rise handlebars. This sporty design was used for both girls' and boys' bikes.



On the move!

Girls today know bicycles aren't toys. Here are facts serious riders should know.

Heads up!

To fit correctly, your helmet should sit squarely on your head, without sliding toward the back. Make sure the helmet covers your forehead and the straps are adjusted for a snug fit.

Bright stuff

When you ride, you want to be visible, so wear bright colors. Fluorescent colors—especially hot pink—are safe bets for daytime riding. White is best to wear at dusk and at night. It's always a good idea to put reflectors on your bike, and fluorescent tape on your helmet, too.

Ahhh!

Water bottles are a popular biking accessory—and not just because they look cool! On long rides take several swigs of water about every half hour, so you don't get overheated.



Tips from the Top

Better Biking

Here are a few biking tips from Tiffani Glowacki, 14, a champion cyclist from Racine, Wisconsin. She's pedaling toward the Summer Olympics in 2000!

- Always ride with traffic—that is, on the right side of the road. Make signals with your left arm so people know where you're headed.



- Don't ride too close behind another cyclist. That way, if the cyclist in front of you brakes suddenly, you can avoid a crash!
- Be sure your bike fits you. Here's a way to find out: Sitting on your bike, put one leg down to the ground. If your bike is the correct size, your leg should have a very slight bend at the knee. If your leg is straight, lower your seat. If your knee is really bent, raise your seat. Happy cycling! ★



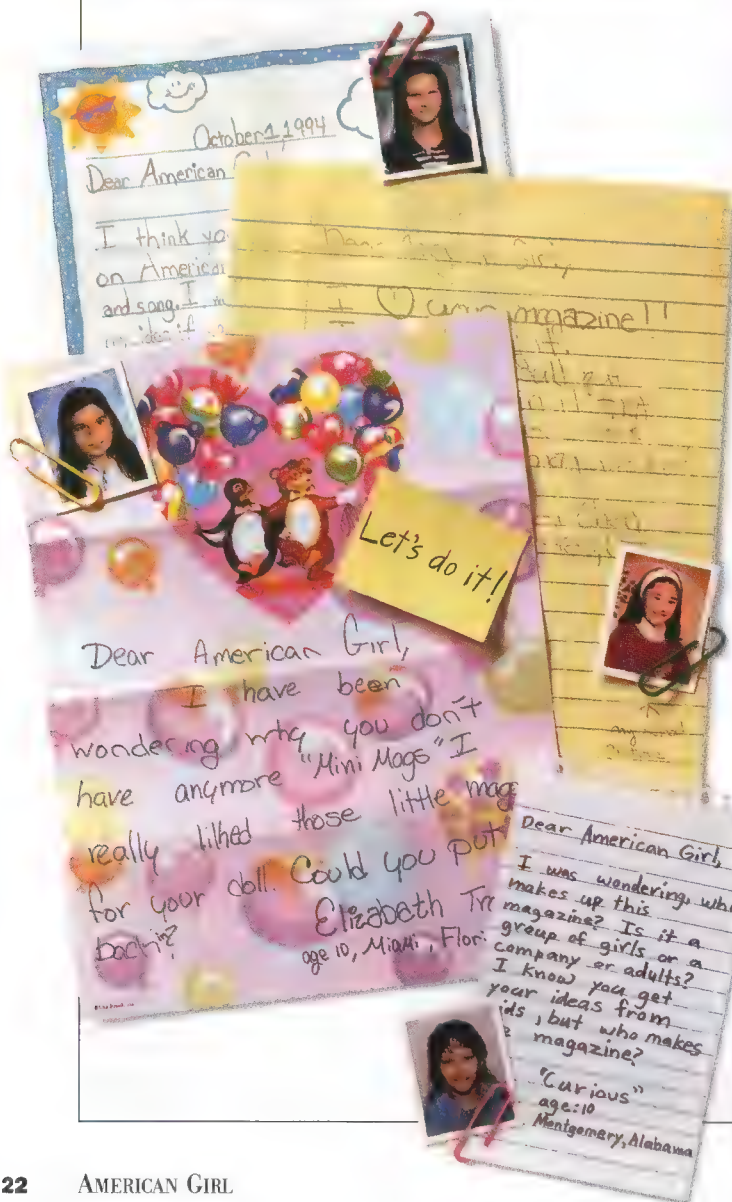
Each April, millions of girls join parents at their jobs for Take Our Daughters to Work Day. This year, we invite you to work with us. Take a peek at how this issue was made!



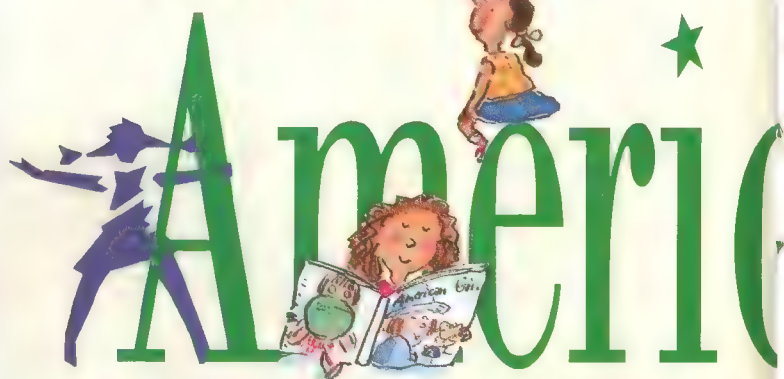
Getting started

A magazine starts with ideas, and great ones often come from you. We

receive about 5,000 letters a month! We can print only a few, but an editor reads each one.



Come to Work At



Lori, Julie, and Suzi read and respond to every letter!



Kym, Pleasant, and Judy look at lots of ideas for the cover.



Anne, Megan, and Heather check page layouts.



Michelle gets the facts on bicycles at the library.

Testing, testing

Girls who live nearby help us make our ideas mistake-proof. We test craft projects, cooking ideas, even puzzles and games!



Michelle and testers measure and mix the Less-Mess Cake.

American Girl®



Therese talks with writers as she works on Girls Express.



Lynn, Margo, and Jennifer use ads to get the word out about AG.



Harriet, Kari, and Kirstin work together on the paper doll.



Customer service staffers answer 500 phone calls a day!

Following a map

We make a map of the magazine to help us decide where each article belongs and how long it should be.

Each rectangle stands for 2 pages.

Back Cover	Cover	Table of Contents	Letters 2	Girls Express 3	Girls Express 4
Girls Express 6	Talk it Out 9	Samantha 10	Samantha 11	Samantha 12	Samantha 13
Samantha	Looking Back 18	Looking Back 20	Looking Back 21		

Getting the scoop

American girls live everywhere. To get their

stories and pictures, we need writers and photographers all over the country—even Alaska!



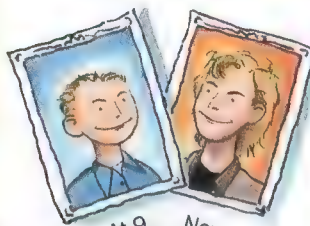
Calling all artists!

Many artists, with different styles of drawing and painting, create the illustrations. These artists appear in each issue!



At 9 Now

Judy Pelikan illustrates the Craft and Cooking pages.



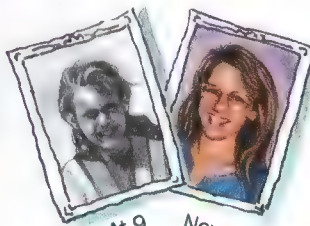
At 9 Now

Scott Nash illustrates Help!



At 9 Now

Mary Lynn Blasutta illustrates Letters from You.



At 9 Now

Susan McAliley illustrates the Paper Doll.



At 9 Now

Paul Meisel illustrates Girls Express and The Giggie Gang.

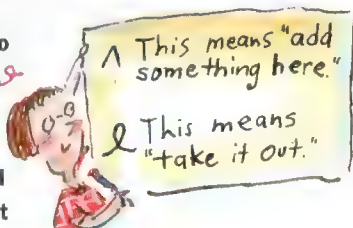
Putting It Together

The stories and pictures are done, but the work's just begun!

Working with words

Articles are reviewed by several editors. Some editors make changes so that the writing is lively, *easy to read, and readable.* Another editor, called a copy editor, fixes spelling and grammar. She uses a set

of symbols like the ones on this paragraph. They're called proofreader's marks.



Picking pictures

Together, the editors and designers choose which photographs tell each story best. These are

some of the pictures we considered for the beginning of "Puppy Love." Check out the results on page 28.



Jacket shows Fanny's special!



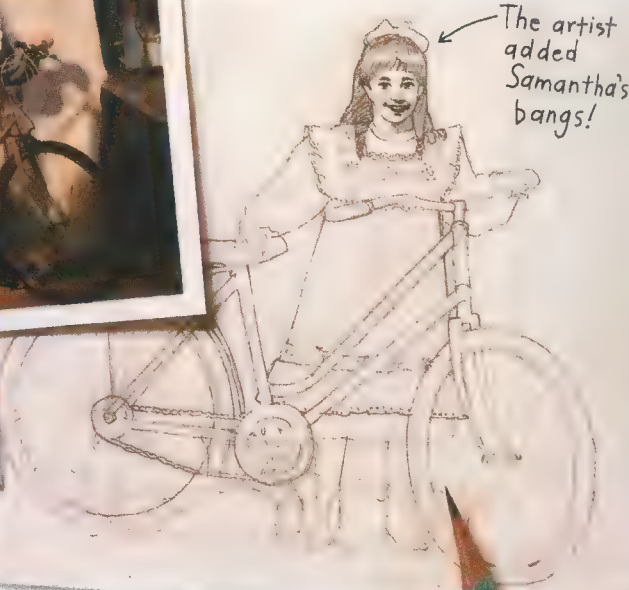
This photo could work...



Cute, but Leanne's hard to see.



Don't you want to pet Fanny?



Drawing Samantha

To illustrate the story about Samantha, the artist found a model who looks like Samantha and posed her as she appears

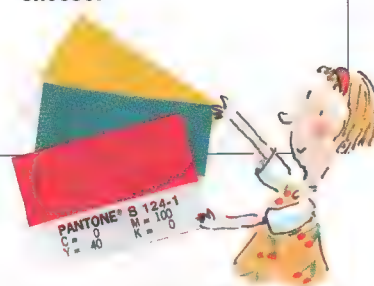
in the story. Looking at all the photographs, the artist drew sketches. When the sketches were just right, the artist used watercolors to paint the final illustrations.



Computers make it easier to see how pages will look.

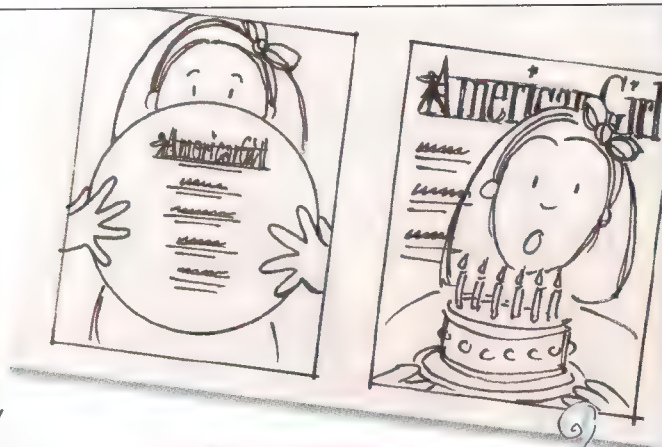
Finishing touches

When the stories and pictures are entered into the computer, designers select a size and color for each headline. Colorful chips like these help them choose!



Making the Cover

We're already hard at work on the cover of the next issue!



Which balloon should we use?
Kym likes the green one best.



Hmmmm . . .

Choosing items for the covers is tough! We look at dozens of balloons, cake ideas and clothes before we decide!

In the beginning

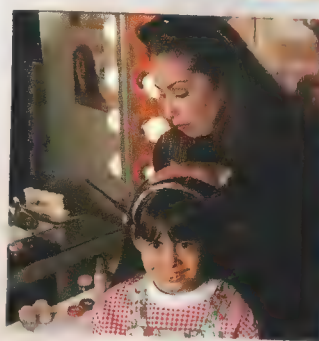
A designer makes a sketch of what the back cover for this issue and the cover of the next one could look like. It will be the same girl in both pictures!



Karen checks the magazine as it rolls off the printing press.



Paul and the rest of the team are ready for the photo shoot!



Yolanda, the hair stylist, touches up Andrea's hair.

Say cheese!

A team of people works all day to photograph the cover. What will the finished cover look like? You'll see when the next issue of *American Girl* arrives!



Karen, the fashion stylist, makes the overalls picture-perfect.

What's next?

It takes months to put each issue together, but it's printed in just a few nights! Copies of the magazine go to more than 400,000 girls across the country—and the world. We hope every girl has as much fun reading it as we did making it! ★





Make a Less-Mess Cake!

One pan + one plastic bag = one very delicious frosted cake!
Try it! You'll have lots of fun—not lots of messy kitchen cleanup.

Less-Mess Cake

YOU WILL NEED

- An adult to help you

Ingredients

- 1½ cups flour
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 3 heaping tablespoons unsweetened cocoa
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 6 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon white vinegar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup cold water

Equipment

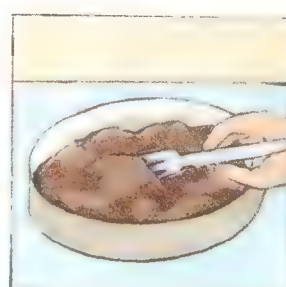
- Measuring cups and spoons
- 8-inch square pan or 9-inch round pan
- Fork, knife, spoon, and toothpick
- Pot holders and plate



1 Wash hands. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Measure the flour, sugar, cocoa, baking soda, and salt into the pan. Mix well with the fork.



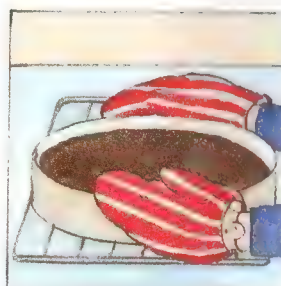
2 Make 3 holes in the dry mixture. Pour the oil into 1 hole, the vinegar into another hole, and the vanilla into the last hole.



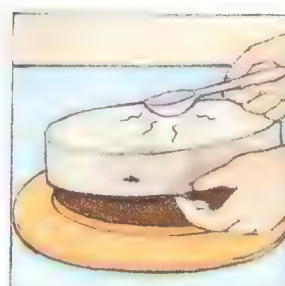
3 Carefully add the cold water, and mix everything together thoroughly with the fork. Dry ingredients can stick to the sides and bottom of the pan. Be sure to mix everything well.



4 Put the pan on the middle rack in the oven. Bake 35 to 40 minutes, or until a toothpick put into the cake comes out clean.



5 Remove the cake from the oven. Let the cake cool in the pan for about 35 minutes.



6 Run the knife around the outside of the cake, separating it from the pan. Turn the pan upside down on the plate. Tap the back of the pan with the spoon to loosen the cake. Lift off pan. Let the cake cool completely.

*Recipes by
Sally Seamans*



Squish 'n' Squeeze Frosting

You will need:

Ingredients

- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 4½ teaspoons milk
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla

Equipment

- Measuring cup and spoons
- Quart-size sealable plastic bag
- Plate, scissors

1 Pour the sugar into the bag. Pour the milk and vanilla into the bag and seal it. Squish the bag with your hands for about 2 minutes until the frosting is smooth.

2 Place another plate over the cooled cake, and flip the cake over so it's right side up.

3 Squeeze the frosting down to 1 corner of the bag. Cut the tip off the corner with scissors. Squeeze the frosting over the cake, as shown below.

Squeeze out swirls, squiggles, or simple straight lines. Frost your cake with flair!



Puppy Love

This is a story about a girl and a dog. It's also about growing up, and learning, and helping someone you've never met.



Photo: Michael Weinstein

A golden retriever puppy named Fanny romped into Leanne Roberts's life in the fall of 1993. That's when Leanne, 9, and her family became part of a puppy-raising program sponsored by the Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind, a group that trains dogs to help blind people.

Since guide dogs don't start official training until they're about 14 months old, the foundation needs volunteer families to care for their puppies until it's time for training.

So when Leanne and her family welcomed three-month-old Fanny into their home, they also knew they'd say goodbye to her in about a year. Each day, as Fanny grew bigger and more mature, she was one day closer to going back to the foundation. After training, she would be matched with a blind owner.

American Girl visited Leanne and Fanny throughout the special year they spent together. Here's their story.

Fall 1993

Someday Fanny will grow into this jacket. It's what makes her different from every other dog in Leanne's town of Setauket, New York.



As she grows older, Fanny will learn that when she's wearing her yellow jacket, it's time for guide-dog training. Right now, though, Fanny spends most of her time just playing with her new friend Leanne.





Erin Cleary, a puppy trainer, takes Leanne and Fanny out for a leash lesson. See how well Fanny's jacket fits her now!

Although she's bigger, Fanny is still just a puppy who wants to explore. One day Fanny will learn to lead her blind owner with care. She'll also learn good judgment. If her owner gives a command but Fanny sees danger, she must know to disobey. This is called *intelligent disobedience*.

Growing Up


Winter 1994 Five months later, Fanny is much bigger. "Fanny is also calmer, and doesn't chew anymore," Leanne explains. "She's almost done teething, that's why." That's a big relief, as anyone who's raised a puppy knows. Along with all the fun of having a new puppy come the not-so-fun things like chewed-up telephone cords and lessons in housebreaking. Raising a puppy takes patience and hard work!

Now that Fanny's older, Leanne and her family work more on obedience commands. A trainer from the Guide Dog Foundation visits the family once every four weeks to help. And Fanny goes out more these days. Since guide dogs go practically everywhere with their blind owners, Leanne and her family must get Fanny used to places like grocery stores and restaurants—even the mall. Fanny always wears her yellow jacket, so business owners know she's part of the guide-dog program.

"People love to pet her and ask what kind of dog she is," says Leanne. "My friends think I'm very lucky to have a dog that I can take lots of different places. And I think so, too."



Fanny learns to wait patiently underneath the table while Leanne and her friends enjoy a meal. There's no doggie bag for Fanny—and never will be. Fanny must never eat anything from the table. She must learn to behave well in restaurants because one day she'll accompany her blind owner out for meals.

A photograph showing a woman and a young girl in a home environment. The woman, on the left, is wearing a dark sweater and light-colored pants, looking down at a dog. The girl, on the right, is wearing a red jacket and holding a leash attached to a light-colored dog. The dog is sitting on a tiled floor. In the background, there is a wooden table and some household items.

Erin shows Leanne a hand command that tells Fanny to sit. Fanny's learning many new things. Most important, she's learning to trust and love the people around her. As a guide dog, Fanny will need to develop a close relationship with her blind owner. Fanny will also have to deal with many other people. Growing up with a caring family will help Fanny approach everyone with confidence and enthusiasm.



Saying Goodbye

Fall 1994 Fanny's been with Leanne for just about a year. Together they've learned a lot and shared a lot—including a couple of under-the-table peanut butter and jelly sandwiches that got them both into trouble! Fanny has continued her work with a trainer, and she's done well. She's also passed important health tests needed to qualify as a guide dog. Now it's time for Fanny to go back to the Guide Dog Foundation for training.

On a bright September day, Leanne and her mom pack Fanny's things and take her to the Guide Dog Foundation. People there thank the Roberts family for helping to raise Fanny, and welcome Fanny into their training program.

This is a sad time, but it's a hopeful time, too. "I know Fanny will be happy helping someone," says Leanne. Someday Leanne and her family hope to meet Fanny's new owner. Someday they hope to see the results of their work, patience, and love. What a happy day that will be!



Leanne and Fanny are met by a representative at the Guide Dog Foundation. This is the last time Leanne will pet Fanny. If Leanne does see Fanny again, it must be from far away. That way, Fanny won't get confused about whether she belongs to Leanne or her blind owner.

A New Life

Fanny's ready to start her new life as a guide-dog-in-training. She now lives in a kennel at the foundation, along with nearly 100 other dogs who are in training. Here Fanny will be taught to perform all sorts of tasks, such as learning to stop at crosswalks. If she performs well during this first training, she'll be matched with a blind owner. Then the two of them will work together at the foundation until they graduate.

There is a possibility that Fanny won't do well enough to be matched with a blind person. If this happens, Leanne's family will have a chance to take Fanny back. If the Roberts family should decide not to keep Fanny, she'd be placed with someone who is on a waiting list for dogs that don't make it through the program.

American Girl will follow Fanny's progress during this next phase of training. Look for Fanny updates in future issues. This story isn't over yet! ★



4. What is hidden in Gramma's cedar chest?

Fanny, her new trainer, and her "classmate," named Carrie, go into town to practice walking on sidewalks. Fanny will be in "class" for two hours every weekday.

Becoming a Puppy Raiser

Many groups are looking for volunteer puppy raisers all over the United States. Families have to meet requirements to qualify for the programs. Here are some of the requirements of the Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind:

- Family must be willing to devote time each day to the care and training of the puppy.
- Family must pay for the cost of feeding the puppy a special diet for the year. It costs about \$30 a month.
- Family must be willing to take the puppy into public to get it used to new people and places.

You can find out more about puppy-raising programs by contacting these groups or others like them in your area.

Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind

371 East Jericho Turnpike
Smithtown, New York 11787
(800) 548-4337

Canine Companions for Independence

P.O. Box 446
Santa Rosa, California 95402
(800) 767-2275





Somewhere Just Beyond

By Barbara A. Smith

Illustrated by Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher

An old china doll lies hidden in Gramma's cedar chest.
Callie wants that doll more than almost anything.

I was five years old when we went to live at the farm. Daddy had gone to Vietnam, so Mama took my big sister Jenny and me to live with Gramma until he got back again.

I loved being with my grandma.

"Callie, you look just like my own little sister," Gramma said sometimes. Her sister's name had been Caroline, too, but they called her Carrie. I knew Carrie from one of the pictures on the wall in Gramma's bedroom. She had solemn eyes and a serious mouth. If I covered her braids, she might have looked like me. Gramma thought all little girls should have long hair, braided to their waists. Mine barely covered my ears.

Late in the afternoons, after the chores were finished and supper was over, Gramma would sit with us girls in the porch swing and rock and talk.

"Gramma, tell us about Carrie," we'd say.

"Well, now, Carrie and I liked to play dolls together." Jenny and I looked at each other and wrinkled up our noses. Not us.

"Carrie's favorite doll was really mine. She had a china head and hands and feet. Her body was made of cloth and stuffed with rags. My grandma gave her to me."

Jenny and I snuggled closer to Gramma, thinking of our dolls sitting patiently upstairs with their plastic curls and rigid plastic arms and legs.

From the book *Somewhere Just Beyond*

“When it’s your turn to leave this earth,” Gramma said, “I’ll be the first one to meet you and hug you in my arms.”

Maybe if we had dolls whose arms and legs moved, we’d like them.

“Carrie packed that doll everywhere we went, except to church,” Gramma went on. Now came the part we were waiting for.

“When Carrie was about as old as Jenny, seven years old, I’d say, she took a notion to walk across the fields to our neighbors’ house. The water in the ditches was deeper than usual because Papa and Grandpa were irrigating that day. Long about supptime, Mama sent my older brother, John, to go over to the neighbors’ to fetch Carrie home. He found my doll in the mud. . . .”

We put our arms around Gramma, hugging and hoping that maybe, just for today, the story would end differently. Her arms circled around us, and she looked off into the sunset like if she looked long enough, she’d see something she recognized.

“My brother hollered, and Papa and Grandpa went tearing out there. Mama was close on their heels.”

Her hands stroked our short curly hair.

“They found Carrie in the big ditch that came off the canal. That doll somehow floated on down to where John found it.

“My mama washed the doll up, but I never played with her anymore. I put her in my mama’s cedar chest.”

I knew Carrie’s doll was still in Great-Grandma’s cedar chest in Gramma’s bedroom. I wanted that doll more than anything, but it would stay right there, Gramma said, until some little granddaughter was big enough to take care of her. Being the oldest, Jenny thought that would be her. I hoped she was wrong.

My birthday came and went, but still the doll stayed in the cedar chest. Then Daddy finally came home from Vietnam. We were happy Daddy was back, and sad to be leaving Gramma. On our last night at the farm, we packed all our things into the back of Daddy’s old pickup truck. After supper, Jenny and I climbed up on the front porch swing beside our gramma and sat close to her. It was quiet a long time.

Finally, Jenny said, “Gramma, will you remember us when we’re gone?”

Gramma started crying then, and we both hugged her close. Those tears just kept running down her cheeks and she kept swinging and hugging us back.

I said, “Gramma . . .”

“Yes, honey.”

“Gramma, I’m goin’ to miss you.”

“Me, too,” Jenny echoed.

“Gramma, tell us about Carrie, one more time.”

She sat quiet for awhile. I was afraid she hadn’t heard me.

Finally she sort of sighed, but we could tell it was a happy sound.

“Carrie is somewhere just beyond where we can’t see,” she started. In the darkness I wished I could see Jenny’s face. Maybe she would know what Gramma meant.

“One night a long time ago I had a dream,” Gramma went on. “I was in my daddy’s front pasture right near where we found Carrie. I was lonesome missing her. Then under the big cottonwood tree I saw her standing. I ran and

hugged her hard. We laughed and cried. It was so good to be together again.

"Then I told her how I missed her and how I wished she could come back. She told me she was very happy where she was, but she was waiting for me and one day I'd join her. So I expect she'll come to meet me when my time is over."

"What do you mean?" I was puzzled.

"When she dies, Callie." Jenny was impatient.

"You going to die, Gramma?"

"Yes, Callie, someday. Everyone will sometime." Her arm was warm around my waist.

"Even me?"

"Even you."

I thought for awhile.

"Is it scary down there in the grave?"

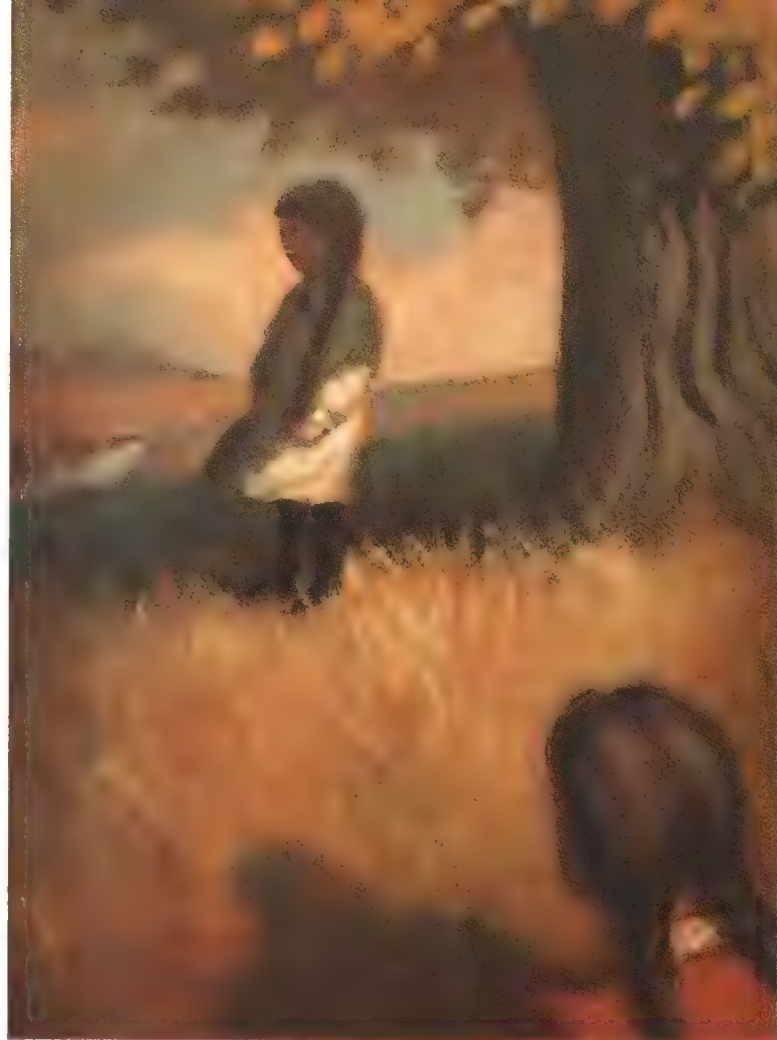
Gramma almost laughed but said instead, "Callie, when you die, your body goes in the ground, but the part of you that thinks and sees and knows other people, that part goes off to live with God, who is our Father in heaven. Why, I believe when it's your turn, and Jenny's turn to leave this earth, I'll be the first one to meet you and hug you in my arms just like I am now."

Later that night, after prayers were said and the light was out, I said to Jenny, "You believe all that Gramma said tonight?"

"I don't know—probably." Jenny pulled the sheet up to her chin. "Gramma never lied to anybody far as I know."

She rolled over, and I turned to look out the window at the stars.

"Star light, star bright . . ." I started the wish I always made, about Daddy coming home. Then I remembered: Daddy *was* home, and we were leaving the farm first thing in the morning. In the soft starlight, I wondered if it was O.K. now to wish that Carrie's doll would finally be mine someday.



W

e visited the farm less often as it got harder for Gramma to cook and clean up after company. Then one summer I went to visit my Aunt Lil, Mama's sister, who lived close to Gramma. Aunt Lil was worried that Gramma needed help, or at least some company. So we loaded the car and headed for the farm. I was excited. Finally, a visit with Gramma all to myself. When we got to the farmhouse, we walked right in the kitchen door.

"Hello!" Aunt Lil called. "Anybody home?"

A high, thin sound answered us.

"E-e-e-e-e." My stomach tightened. "E-e-liz-a-beth . . ." Gramma was the only person I knew who called Aunt Lil by her real name.



"Mama, where are you?" Aunt Lil's voice was frantic as she hurried down the hall to the bathroom.

"Lil-lee, that you?" The voice was quavering and crying. "Lil-lee, he-e-ere . . ."

I followed Aunt Lil down the hall and looked through the bathroom door to see my grandma lying on the floor all twisted up like a broken doll. Her face was gray. There was an angry bruise on her cheek. Her eyes were bloodshot and her hair was matted to her head. I looked away, swallowing hard to keep from crying.

"Oh, Mama." Aunt Lil knelt beside her mother. "How long you been here like this?"

Grandma didn't answer the question.

"Oh, 'Lizabeth, I hurt." She lay next to the bathtub, her old nightgown twisted around her knees.

"What happened to her?" I asked Aunt Lil.

"She's had a fall, Callie. I think maybe she broke her hip or something." She turned me around and said, "Callie, you go. Now!"

I wanted to vomit back what I had just seen. There was a skeleton in the bathroom wearing Grandma's nightgown, but it couldn't be Grandma. Down the hall I held the wall, wanting to run. Maybe I would find Grandma in her room.

In Grandma's bedroom the bed was unmade, but the covers were folded back like she had just gotten up. The bed was empty.

I slipped out through the kitchen and I ran. I ran until my throat burned and I couldn't see through my tears. It was dark when I got back.

Next morning, I got up early and walked out to the garden. What a mess! Grandma had always kept it looking tidy. I started at one end and pulled weeds. When I finished and got back to the house, Grandma's doctor had already come out from town to see her. Aunt Lil met me at the door.

“Carrie, I’ve seen you waiting across the field,” Gramma said. “I called and called to you. Why didn’t you come?”

“The doctor says Gramma’s hip is fine, but she’s had a stroke,” she said.

“A stroke?” I asked.

“It’s caused when the blood supply to part of the brain is cut off for some reason. A little part of the brain dies.”

I nodded even though I didn’t really understand.

“Gramma’s dead set against going to the hospital,” Aunt Lil said. “The doctor says as long as we stay here it will be fine for her to be here.”

Aunt Lil pushed her hair back from her face and sighed. “Gramma’s talking crazy. She keeps asking if I’ve seen Carrie. I try to tell her that Carrie’s been gone now for sixty or seventy years, but she keeps insisting that she’s here.”

“Why do you suppose she thinks that?” I picked some dried grass from under my thumbnail.

“I don’t know . . . sometimes a stroke does that to a person. She seems pretty good except for that. You ought to go talk to Gramma, Callie.”

When I walked into Gramma’s room, her eyes were bright and she was propped up on a couple pillows. I kissed her and sat down in the chair.

“I’m glad you’re back.” Gramma was beaming. “Let me look at you.”

She looked me in the face and started to frown like something was a mystery to her.

“What have you done to your hair?”

“I let it grow. How do you like it? It’ll be long enough for braids soon.”

“You mean it was shorter than this? Carrie, who cut off your beautiful long braids?”

Goose bumps rose on my arms as she reached up and fingered the ends of my hair.

“Gramma, I’m Callie, Caroline.” My throat was getting tight and I was afraid I might cry.

“Now Carrie, I’m old, I know, but I’m not *your* gramma.” Gramma’s eyes softened. “Carrie, I’ve seen you waiting across the field. I called and called to you. Why didn’t you come?”

I didn’t know what to say. “I don’t know, Gram—” I broke off her name smack in the middle of the word.

“For pity’s sake, call me Kate!”

Tears gathered in the corners of my eyes.

“I’ve been looking forward to seeing you again for years,” Gramma said. “Know what else?”

I shook my head, not trusting my voice.

“I’ve saved that doll Grandma Hale gave me. You know, the one you liked to pack around?”

I nodded. I knew the story well.

“It’s right here in Mama’s cedar chest. You want to see her?”

I nodded, not daring to contradict her again.

“Well, girlie, go get it.”

The wood grain of the chest was smooth and soft under my fingers. I lifted the cover. The scent of cedar rose to greet me. There she was: Carrie’s doll. I lifted her up and cradled her like a baby.

I walked back around the bed and sat on the chair. The doll’s clothes were faded and thin with age. Gramma looked from it to my face, smiling and nodding.

“I knew I was right to save it. You’ve got your baby back again. What was that song we used to sing? You know, about the little sandman who closes baby’s eyes with thistledown?”

Then I started to cry. It was a song Gramma sang to me. Long ago, when she was still my gramma.

“Now, Carrie, don’t take on so. It’s all right. I never could remember the second verse is all.”

I wanted to throw the doll across the room and



scream, "My name is Callie! Callie! Stop calling me Carrie. You are my gramma. You are!"

Instead, I hugged the doll tighter. I could hardly see through my tears. Gramma pulled me closer and I buried my face in the quilt.

With her fingers she combed through my hair, just like she used to, starting at the crown and working her way down to the ends. Down and down and up again. Then she started singing that lullaby. I stopped crying to listen. Her hands grew slower and my chest felt less tight.

I started to say Gramma, but didn't. I lifted my head. Her eyes were sleepy and far away.

"Kate . . ." I tried the name cautiously. "Katie, I'll be back. Is that O.K.?"

"That's what you always say."

Tears gathered in her eyes and she turned her face away from me. I lifted the quilt over her shoulders and leaned over to kiss her. Her eyes were closed and her cheeks were wet.

I felt horrible as I walked down the hall to the kitchen. I looked at Aunt Lil.

"What shall I do with the doll?" I looked down at it still cradled in my arm.

"Keep her, Callie. Gramma always was going to give her to you someday. You, Callie. That's what she told me time and again."

Slowly I climbed the stairs to my bedroom. I laid the doll on the vanity and looked closely at myself in the mirror. I didn't look like Carrie to me. I stroked the cool, silky porcelain of the doll's head. All my life I'd wanted this doll. Now here she was. All mine. Why was I so sad?

That evening after supper, I walked back down the hall to Gramma's room. She looked like she was sleeping soundly, so I sat down on the chair next to her side of the bed. I picked up her hand and held it. I must have fallen asleep, because next thing I knew, my head was on the bed and

Gramma was stroking my hair again.

I sat very still. Was it me she was comforting? I had to know.

"Gramma." I said it softly.

"Yes, Callie." Her voice was soft but sure.

I sat up and looked into her pale blue eyes. They were smiling back at me.

"Gramma, I love you."

"I love you, too, Callie." She reached up and put her hand on my cheek.

"Are you going to miss me when I'm gone, Callie?" Her voice was barely a whisper now.

I nodded, and swallowed. But it did no good.

A night breeze puffed through the open window, lifting the curtains.

"Carrie's waiting. I've got to go," she said.

There was nothing else I could think of to say.

"You'll remember, won't you, Callie?"

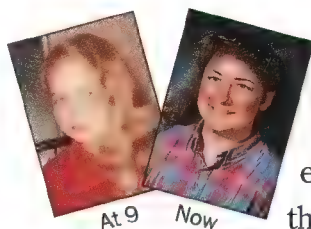
"What, Gramma?"

"I'll be back to meet you. When your time comes, Carrie and I will be back to meet you."

I knew she would keep her word. ★

Meet the Author

Barbara A. Smith



I knew two of my great-grandmothers and loved each dearly. The way I keep them close to me is to write about them. Even though the story of Callie did not really happen, the feelings Callie has for her grandmother are the feelings I had for mine.

Do you have advice for girls who are dealing with the death of a grandmother or other loved one? Answer the Talk It Out question on page 9.

The Giggle Gang



Fancy Flowerpots



Laura's mother hid a house key under one of the flowerpots. But which one is the key under? Read the clues below to find out.

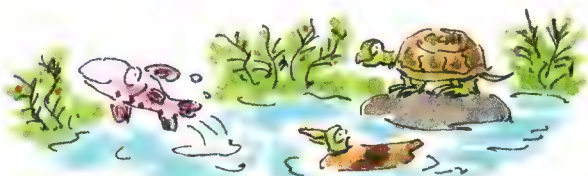
1. It's not under a pot that has a red design.
2. It is to the left of the checkered pot.

3. It is to the right of a pot that has more than one flower growing in it.
4. It is under a pot that has a blue design.
5. It is to the left of the polka-dotted pot.

Soggy Scramble

Each of these words has something to do with water. Can you unscramble them?

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. PODN | 6. SLUHS |
| 2. LOPO | 7. EARST |
| 3. RANI | 8. VAWE |
| 4. ROBOK | 9. ANACL |
| 5. OCANE | 10. RIDP |



Magic Square

The magical thing about this square is that the numbers in every row, column, and on the diagonal add up to 30—if you fill in the square correctly. We've started you off. Can you fill in the rest?

8		15	4
	14		9
6		1	
11	0		7



In March. Ann Hammond
Age 12, Modesto, California

What do you get when you cross a karate expert and a pig? Pork chops. Katina McMullan
Age 11, Glen Ellyn, Illinois



Read a Rebus



A rebus is a message that is spelled out in pictures. To solve this rebus, write the name of each item in the blanks below its picture. Then cross out the letters being subtracted

from the words you've written. Fill in the last set of blanks with the remaining letters to find out what we think of *American Girl* readers.



- ELLW +



- TKY =



- TIE +



- HR =



Five by Five

To play this game, you need at least one other girl, paper, pencils, a kitchen timer, and a little imagination.

Each girl starts by drawing a box that's five squares high and five squares across.

As a group, pick five letters for everyone to put across the tops of their boxes. Then pick five categories to write down the side, such as cities, colors, girls' names, sports, and food. Make up any categories you want.

Set the timer for five minutes. Each girl tries to fill in all her squares with words that belong in each category and that begin with the letter on top. Don't shout out your answers!

When the timer goes off, take turns reading the answers aloud. Girls get one point for each square they've filled in correctly. In the next round, change the letters on top, but keep the categories the same.

Think hard!



How do robins get in shape? They do worm-up exercises. Janet Bittner
Age 10, Barker, New York

I can make words

What did one rose say to another? "Hi, bud." Nicole Kmiotek
 Age 11, Bayside, New York
 Janis Maculay
 Age 12, Makakilo, Hawaii
 disappear, and the more you use me, the smaller I become. What am I? An eraser.

The Giggle Gang

What Is It?

It's something that the Giggle Gang won't be caught without this spring. Can you figure out what it is? The answer to each clue is a single letter. Write the letter in the blank at right, then read down the letters to find out what the Giggle Gang needs!

Its first letter is in **blue**, but not in **bell**.

Its second letter is in **stamp**, but not in **past**.

Its third letter is in **bead**, **bad**, **bed**, and **Abe**, but not in **dead**.

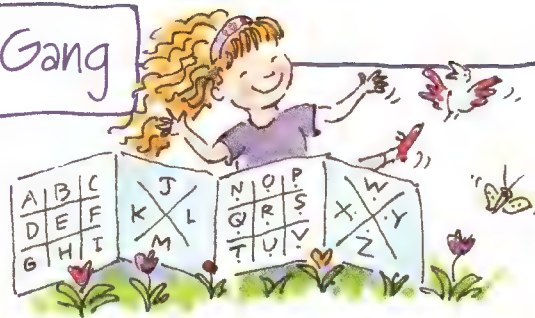
Its fourth letter is in **tour**, but not in **out**.

Its fifth letter is in **rate**, but not in **art**.

Its sixth letter is in **leap**, **lap**, **pal**, and **pale**, but not in **ape**.

Its seventh letter is in **land**, but not in **and**.

Its eighth letter is in **act**, **all**, and **ate**.



AG Code

Use the decoder below to unscramble this issue's secret message.

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □
P _ _ _ _ _

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □
_ _ _ _ _

< □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □
_ _ _ _ _

Send Us More!

We hear girls are making up their own secret codes! If you have a code, send it to us, along with your decoder. Don't forget to send us more jokes and riddles, too.

Answer Box

11	0	7
6	13	1
14	2	9
8	3	15

Magic Square:

Fancy Flowerpots: The key is under the flowerpot that has a fish on it.
Soggy Scramble: 1. pond, 2. pool, 3. rain, 4. brook, 5. ocean, 6. slush, 7. tears, 8. wave, 9. canal, 10. drip.
Read a Rebus: You're great!
What is it?: Umbrella
AG Code: Put some spring in your step!
You'll find the Buzzword, flabbergasted, on page 18.
Find it 1: page 32
Find it 2: page 18
Find it 3: paper doll
Find it 4: page 35
Find it 5: page 3
Find it 6: page 4

Why did the kids tell jokes to the mirror? To see it crack up.

Sara Reuti

How can you tell if a tree is a dogwood tree? By its bark.

Julie Tulba

What goes all around the yard but never moves? A fence.

Briana Darnell

What can you make with two banana peels?

What's the difference between a coyote and a flea? One howls on the prairie; the other prowls on the hairy.

Age 13, Savannah, Georgia

Age 12, Harleysville, Pennsylvania

A pair of slippers.

HELP!

Dear American Girl,

I've got a problem. I'm scared to say something to my mom because she might get mad.

Can't talk

Try practicing what you need to say with a friend, so you don't get flustered. Then ask your mom to set aside time to talk, so she's not busy with other things. Keep in mind that no matter how much you prepare, you can't control how someone will feel about what you say. But if you can listen to each other's real feelings—even angry ones—you could wind up feeling closer than ever.



Dear American Girl,

I have two good friends. One of them is my best friend. When I tell the other one I have to talk to my best friend alone, she has a cow, and tells the teacher a lie about me!

A nice girl but MAD!

Your friend is lashing out because she feels hurt. It's wrong for her to tell lies. But it's also not right to tell secrets in front of her. Save your private talks for when you're



alone with your best friend. That will spare your other friend's feelings—and your friendship, too.



Dear American Girl,

I get scared over silly things in movies. No matter how much I tell myself that they're not real, I can't stop thinking about them.

My sister calls me a scaredy-cat.

scared stiff

Many people feel just the way you do. To keep from getting that creepy feeling, be choosier! Find out ahead of time whether a movie will have scary parts. If it sounds bad, tell your family or friends you don't think you'll like it, and suggest another movie. If no one agrees, do something fun by yourself. Don't waste your time watching things you don't enjoy.

Dear American Girl,

I just found out that one of my best friends is adopted and she does not know. I don't know if I should tell her or let her parents tell her.

Question mark

Keep this to yourself! There's no way to know for sure if your friend really is adopted. If she is, she may already know and prefer not to discuss it. If she doesn't know, her parents should tell her in their own way. If you need to talk about this, confide in your parents.

Letting the rumor loose around school could crush your friend.



Dear American Girl,

I need help with popularity. I don't understand it. Why do people make fun of other people just because they're different?

confused

It may not seem so, but kids who tease are often the most insecure. They point out what's "wrong" with others to cover up what's not right inside themselves. They may make the most noise, but they don't make the truest friends.

MORE HELP!

Dear American Girl,

I have an unusual problem. I read too much! My mom has to yell at me to do what she wants. Sometimes I don't pay attention in class because I'm reading under my desk! What should I do?

Bookworm

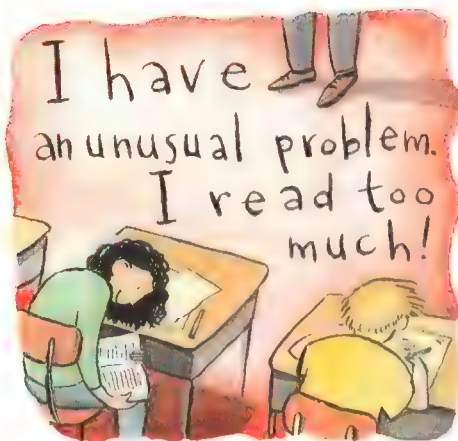
It's wonderful that you love reading so much! Just be sure to get your chores and homework done before you get lost in your latest literary adventure. At school, leave your book in your coat pocket or backpack so you won't be tempted to sneak a read during class. Your book will be there, waiting for you like a good friend, when class is over.



Dear American Girl,

I have a really awesome best friend. The problem is sometimes she'll use me. We go out to the store and she'll waste her money on junk. Then she'll ask if she can borrow my money. She says she'll pay me back, but she never does!

Used Again



When someone borrows money and doesn't pay it back, she's stealing. But your friend can't use you this way unless you let her. Next time she asks for cash, gently remind her that she hasn't repaid you. Tell her you're worried it might come between you, and that it's best if you each spend your own money from now on. A true friend will pay you back—and won't take advantage of you again.



Dear American Girl,

My friends think I'm bossy. My mom tells me to try not to boss people around. It is a problem sometimes. I need help!

Big Brat

It's not the worst thing in the world to be bossy. "Bossy" girls can become good leaders—if they

learn to take other girls' ideas as seriously as their own. Practice really listening to your friends' feelings and ideas. Show them you think they're important, too. The more you listen to other girls, the more they'll want to listen to you!



Advice from You

"Sometimes I argue with my younger brother or sister. I used to get fed up, and kick or pinch them, but now I've realized something. Since I'm the oldest, everyone looks up to me. If I don't fight, they won't either! To stop fighting, I clench my fists and stamp my feet, punch a pillow, or do something I enjoy to get my mind off it."

JESSIE duPont
Age 9, Greenwich, Connecticut

Need advice? Write:

Help!

American Girl

8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562

6. Where are the Native Youth Olympics held?



The Doll, by Eastman Johnson, 1856

Imagine *You can't wait to hold your new doll.*

It's 1856, and your family has settled near the shore of Lake Superior. On a windy spring evening, you and your mother and little sister are cozy in your cabin, chatting excitedly about the days ahead. Now that the ice on the lake has melted, huge steamships will soon chug into town, laden with news and supplies.

Your mother hopes for a letter from your aunt in the east. You're hoping for potatoes and good oil to fry them in. All you've had to eat all winter is fish from the lake, and you're a bit tired of it! You know better, though, than to hope for special things like toys or furniture. The steamships may be big, but there's no room—or money—for luxuries.

Here on the frontier, you've learned to use your imagination. A shiny tin plate makes a good mirror. For chairs, old crates will do. And for a doll, your mother is giving you her wooden darning egg—that is, until she needs it again for mending stockings!

As your mother finishes dressing your darning egg doll, you can barely wait to cradle her in your arms. With a painted face and a bit of rough white cotton for a gown, she's the loveliest doll you've ever seen. Tomorrow you'll go hunting for an old clothespin or a wooden spoon. Then, with a scrap of fabric—and a little imagination—your little sister will have a new doll, too! ★



American Girl®

Coming up in the May/June issue

The Difficult Dog

A Molly story by Valerie Tripp

Fond Farewells

How to end your school year in style

The Best Birthday Ever!

Great ways to celebrate

When You Have to Move

Readers like you talk it out

Presents for Parents

Great crafts for mothers and fathers

Plus:

Fun, almost-free goodies to send for,
and your pop-out paper doll #16



FALON ROBBINS

A Real American Girl of Today

Meet Falon Robbins—and some of the remarkable women in her family. Twelve-year-old Falon lives in Youngstown, Ohio. She can trace her family back more than 135 years, to her great-great-great-grandmother, who lived in Georgia!

In this special pull-out section you'll find a paper doll of Falon, plus outfits worn by her and by some of the women in her family when they were girls. Pop out the clothes and put them on your paper doll. Then make Falon's little history book. The stories about the women in her family will help you imagine what their lives were like when they wore these clothes.



Illustrations: Susan McAliley

❖ PULL OUT FOR POP-OUT PAPER DOLL #15 ❖

BE A DOLL

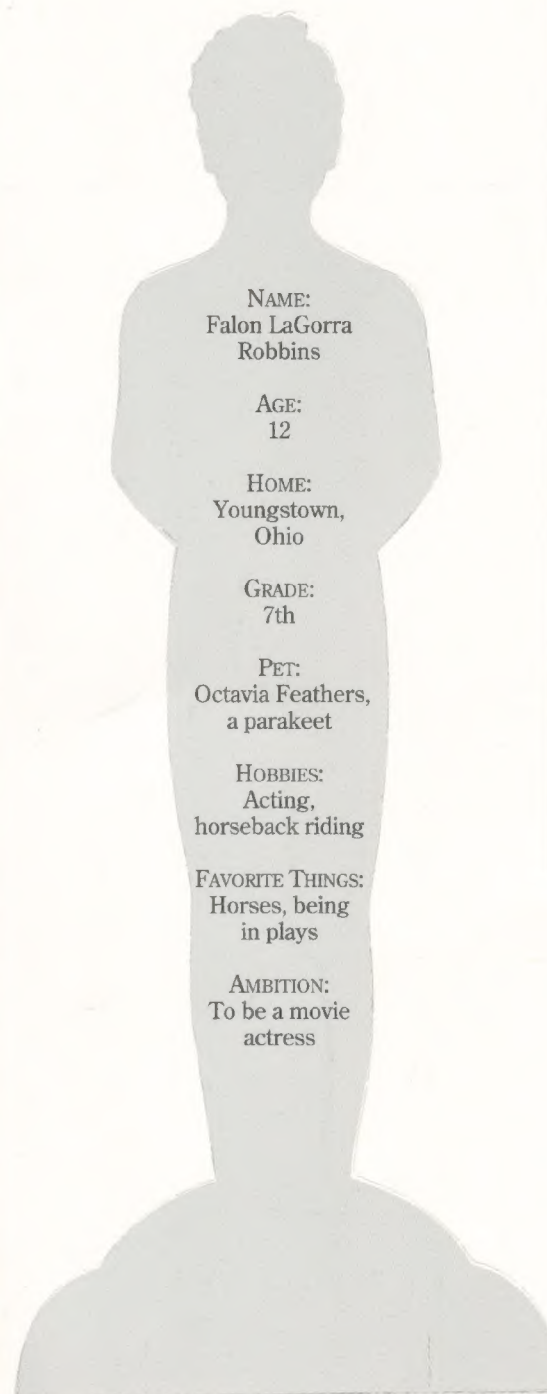
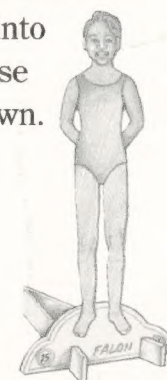
Falon is the fifteenth in a series of paper dolls that appear in each issue of *American Girl*. You could be one, too! Talk to your parents about the lives of the women in your family. Then send us:

1. Stories about those women *when they were girls*.
2. Photocopies of pictures of those women *as girls*.
3. Pictures and stories about yourself.
4. A self-addressed stamped envelope (so your material can be returned).

Mail everything to:
American Girl Paper Doll
 8400 Fairway Place
 Middleton, WI 53562

IMPORTANT: All pictures and stories should be of girls, not grown-up women.

INSTRUCTIONS:
 Pop out the stand for the paper doll. Fold it in half. Slide it into the slits in the base of the doll as shown.



NAME:
Falon LaGorra Robbins

AGE:
12

HOME:
Youngstown,
Ohio

GRADE:
7th

PET:
Octavia Feathers,
a parakeet

HOBBIES:
Acting,
horseback riding

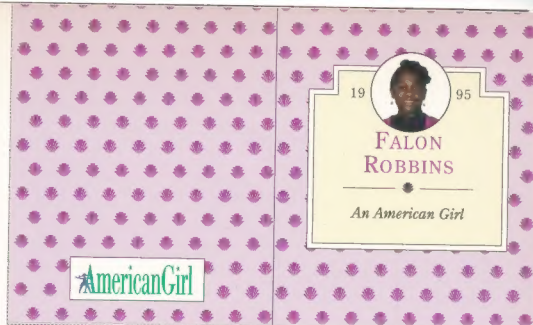
FAVORITE THINGS:
Horses, being
in plays

AMBITION:
To be a movie
actress

MAKE FALON'S BOOK

Here's how:

1. Pop out the book along the dotted lines.
2. Put B inside A. Remove the tabs.
3. Fold along the solid lines.
4. Turn the book over. Staple it along the fold.

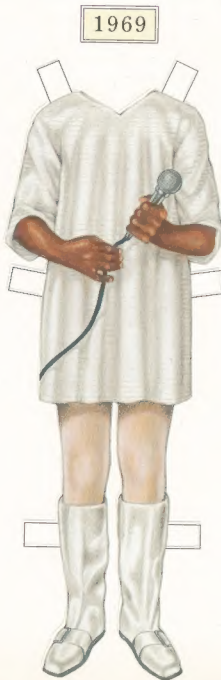
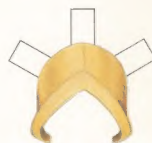


1911
AMANDA

When Falon's great-great-grandmother Amanda was a girl in Georgia, a group of white men called the Ku Klux Klan terrorized and killed many African Americans. One day men from the KKK broke into Amanda's house. They beat her mother and frightened the four children. As soon as they could, the family moved to the North, to be safer from the Klan.

1995
FALON

Many of the girls in Falon's family have had unusual names. Falon's name comes from a character on the TV show *Dynasty*. Her middle name, LaGorra, is also her grandmother's name. LaGorra means "the hat" in Spanish. LaGorra's mom heard the name on a radio program and liked it so much she picked it for her daughter. Now it's part of Falon's name, too!



Doll Stand

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:

An American Girl

1857
AMANDA

When Falon's great-great-great-grandmother Amanda was a girl in Georgia, some slave owners were kinder to animals than they were to slaves. They hung mosquito nets in their barns, to keep the ferocious insects from stinging their horses as they slept. They hung nets over their own beds, too. But many black slaves like Amanda got no protection from the mosquitoes at all.



1969
ANGEL

When Falon's mother, Angel, was a girl, she and three of her friends started a singing group called the Starfires. Many of the famous singing groups up till then had been men. In the 1960s, "girl" groups like the Supremes and the Marvelettes became more and more popular. The Starfires even appeared on a local TV show!



1929
MARY

When Falon's great-grandmother Mary was growing up in Ohio, she and her brothers and sisters liked to play school. For "break time" they snatched jars of peaches from the fruit cellar. One day Mary's mother asked one of the children to go get a jar of peaches. She couldn't believe there were none left! That was the end of "break time!"



1929
MARY

Falon's great-grandmother When Mary was growing up in Ohio, she loved hats. In fact, she didn't feel like she was really dressed up unless she was wearing a hat! Her favorite kind of hat was the cloche (rhymes with glow-shh). The word *cloche* comes from the French word for bell. Can you figure out how cloche hats got their name?

1969
ANGEL

Falon's mother This outfit was Angel's Starfires costume. (See page 2 of Falon's little book for the story.) Mini-dresses and go-go boots like these were all the rage. Minis, as they were called, had become popular in England in the mid-1960s. By the time Angel was nine, American girls were wearing them, too.

1995
FALON

An American Girl Falon loves acting and theater more than anything else in the whole world. She takes acting workshops at a community arts center near her house in Ohio, and acts in plays there, too. She loves performing on the stage. But her real dream is to act in movies. Get ready, Hollywood—here comes Falon!

1857
AMANDA

Falon's great-great-great-grandmother When Amanda was growing up in Georgia, most African Americans in the South were enslaved. Some slaves worked in the fields, and some, like Amanda, worked inside the houses of the white owners. Some of the wealthier owners handed down their old clothes to their house slaves, because they wanted everything they owned—including their slaves—to look rich and important. Amanda might have worn a dress like this as a hand-me-down from her owners.

1911
AMANDA

Falon's great-great-grandmother When Amanda was growing up in Georgia, one of her chores was doing the family's laundry. It wasn't easy to keep good dresses like this one clean. Amanda made a fire and filled a big metal tub full of water. When the water was hot, she used it to wash the family's clothes. With four children in the family, there were always lots of clothes to scrub!